UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST
COMMONWEALTH HONORS COLLEGE (CHC) COUNCIL

The charge of the Commonwealth Honors College Council is to provide advice to the Dean on all matters relating to the administration of the Honors College, its curriculum and policy, including;

- honors course approvals;
- standards governing the establishment, modification and termination of all Departmental Honors and Multidisciplinary Honors programs;
- standards governing CHC student admission and graduation; and
- standards governing and the direction of Honors theses/projects and independent studies.

Minutes

Date **September 18, 2023 12:20–2:00 PM**

Location **via Zoom** https://umass-amherst.zoom.us/j/93551699900?pwd=VzN4a0dVMU5Sd1p4ZUdrbWp0QllKZz09
Meeting ID: 935 5169 9900 **Passcode:** 955920

Attendance Benjamin Marlin, Camille Cammack, Dominick Usher, Elena Carbone, Jean MacKimmie, Kim Tremblay, Madalina Akli, Mari Castañeda, Melanie Radik, Muzzo Uysal, Neal Anderson, Patrick Sullivan, Shelly Perdomo-Ahmed (guest), Stacy Giufre, Susan Ware, Theresa Dooley, Tom Brashear-Alejandro, Casey Krone (minutes)

Introductions

Approve Minutes Minutes of 5/8/2023 approved with 3 abstentions

Announcements

Updates from the Dean (*Mari Castañeda)*

- Thank you to all for being part of the CHC Council, your engagement and support is appreciated.
- CHC Council meetings for October, November, February, March, and April will be via Zoom. Meetings for December and May will be hybrid with lunch for those attending in person. Hybrid meetings will be in CHC Events Hall 160E.
- With support from the Provost CHC has hired:
    - Two new teaching faculty, Maxine Oland and Mark Roblee.
    - Brought Connie Griffin from UWW, who will teach thesis seminars with Flex and is a Flex Fellow.
- CHC is finally at capacity with staffing, all of our positions are fille including all new positions.
    - Our development position moved to the UMass Foundation but Meredith Feltus did not follow her position to the Foundation and we were able to create a new Director of Community Relations & Strategic Impact position and have hired Meredith in that position. Will help with strategic planning of the college.
- Chancellor's Listening Session for CHC is tomorrow, hybrid, 1:30-2:45pm. CHC leadership team will present, including Dean Mari Castaneda, Senior Assistant Dean Dominick Usher, Associate Deans Elena Carbone and Ann Marie Russell, and Director of Advising LizAnette Perez-LeBeouf. This is part of a larger effort that Chancellor Reyes is initiating with his leadership across campus.
- The Massachusetts Undergraduate Research Conference will be Friday, April 19, 2024, in person at our Campus Center. We work with campuses commonwealth-wide to put on the conference. Due to a strong preference for in-person we will not do a hybrid conference this year. Focus on poster sessions for attendees and we hope this will allow for most engagement

from our students. Date has always been the 3rd week of April because of the context of the entire higher ed system, many community colleges finish earlier than UMass.
    - This will be the 30th anniversary of the MassURC.
    - Very few undergraduate research conferences are statewide, maybe two besides MassURC. Financially it is becoming a challenge, so we will be talking to the provost & chancellor about funding. Currently most of the funding comes from the CHC budget and statewide partners. This is an important space for our students (statewide).

- CHC Social Justice and Dialogue group invites faculty & staff to come together once a month to discuss a reading with a focus on engagement and justice across identities. We will read one book this year, The Inner Work of Racial Justice: Healing Ourselves & Transforming Our Communities Through Mindfulness by Ronda McGee. One section each month. Let Casey know if you would like a copy of the book or the invite.
- This year is the Dean's Review, happens in the fourth year and is a yearlong process. Survey developed by Provost's office plus their committee. This will be for considering a second appointment for Dean Castañeda for the Deanship. The Council will likely be part of that conversation.

Introduction from new CHC Council Chair *(Ben Marlin)*

- The October meeting will include a proposal for a minor revision to the CHC curriculum, designed to make it easier for our students who come in with more credits, AP exams, etc. to complete the CHC curriculum.
- ASC has been understaffed for several years now, ASC chairs have been doing a herculean task to get student ISH & 499 proposals reviewed. Working on better representation from across campus before the next set of reviews.
- How has the mandatory thesis change impacted across campus? How are honors thesis courses distributed across campus vs individual theses?
- There are several vacancies on the CHC Council. One is for a student representative, if you have nominations please reach out to me.

New Business

1. Guest Speaker: Dr. Shelly Perdomo-Ahmed, Interim Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs and Campus Life
    a. Interim Vice Chancellor Perdomo-Ahmed presented on university efforts to support our students outside the classroom and the resources available on campus. The Council discussed opportunities and challenges with various offices on campus and how faculty can successfully support student connection to the resources available to them. Council members also expressed concern for support for faculty in terms of how to implement accommodations for students who have approved accommodations.
        i. Theresa Dooley is running a workshop on Tuesday, November 14, 2024 1:00-2:00pm Building Inclusive Course Materials with Open Educational Practices
2. Honors Course Review (*Mari Castañeda*)
    - See attached course review recommendations
    - Consent agenda unanimously approved.
    - The syllabus for PUBHLTH 389H will be used as a model for others, as it was exceptional.
3. 2022-2023 Annual Report *(Mari Castañeda)*

a. Annual Report unanimously approved and will be submitted to the next meeting of the Faculty Senate.

Any Other Business

Committee Reports

Reports from CHC Council Representatives on other Councils

1. Academic Standards Committee Review *(Elena Carbone)*
    a. There are 8 members on ASC currently.
    b. There are approximately 100 less proposals at this point this year than there were last year.
    c. Data collection will continue to enable us to assess the impact of increased thesis seminar capacity.
2. Academic Matters Council *(Dominick Usher)*
    a. The new Academic Matters Committee chair is Allison Butler. Senior Assistant Dean Usher will step in to Course Review Committee role. AMC is looking for more people to serve on subcommittees for course reviews and programs. Longer term planning around clearer guidelines for syllabus content was also discussed.
3. Research Council *(Thomas Brashear-Alejandro)*
    a. Has not met yet. Last year was first time MassURC was discussed, would like to get that on their agenda this fall as soon as possible. First meeting is 9/29, try to get on October agenda. Would like to push harder in ISOM to have students doing independent projects to get involved even if it's not a thesis.
    b. Has been on ASC going on 8 years or so, the quality of proposals is markedly better. We now have better feedback mechanism that keeps us from being afraid of something getting lost in the system. Heard from advisors that they did not really know how much detail we wanted on these things. Talking about it earlier with students has had a tremendous effect on the quality, which makes it easier as a reviewer.
4. Undergraduate Education Council – Chair Marlin and CHC Associate Dean Elena Carbone will be on that council but it has not met yet.

Next Meeting

October 16, 2023, 12:20-2:00 pm

Attachments

- Honors Course Review materials
- 2022-2023 Annual Report
- Minutes from 5-8-23 meeting